

THE
Voice of the Innocent uttered forth:

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O R,

The Call of the Harmless and Oppressed

F O R

Justice and Equity.

B E I N G

A brief Relation of some Remarkable
Passages, concerning the Tryal and sentencing of five of the People of God called *Quakers*, at the Sessions holden at the Castle of *Northampton*, upon the fourth and sixth days of the second Month, called *April*, in the year 1665. *Richard Rainsford* sitting Judge, there being present several of those called Justices for the said County; two of their names are as followeth, *Henry Telverton* and *John Willoughby*, &c.

From the People of God called *Quakers*, who
are sufferers in the County Goal of *Northampton*
for Conscience sake.

Hereunto is added a Postscript.

Acts 5. 38, 39.

And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this Council, or this Work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest happily ye be found even to fight against God.

London, Printed in the Year, 1665.

UPon the fourth and sixth dayes of the second Month, in the year 1665. the Sessions being holden for the County of *Northampton*, many of the people called *Quakers*, were brought forth to the same: Upon the sixth day of the Month aforesaid, the Court being set, and *Richard Rainsford* sitting Judge, four of the said Prisoners were called to the Bar, whose names are as followeth, *viz. William Robinson, Richard Parsons, John Coory, and Elizabeth Harris.* Proclamation was made that all should keep silence, &c.

The first and second Convictions (so called) being read, and their Indictment also, which was very large; but the substance thereof was to this effect, as near as can be remembred: *That whereas William Robinson, Richard Parsons, John Coory, and Elizabeth Harris, and every of them, being unlawfully assembled at Robert Ashby's house, situate and being in Bugbrook, in the County of Northampton, with divers other Malefactors, contrary to the Liturgy or practice of the Church of England, in contempt to the King, his Laws, and against his Crown and Dignity, &c.*

Judge. *William Robinson, what say you & are you guilty or not guilty of your Indictment?*

Prisoner. I was at a Meeting to worship the living God, in Spirit and in Truth; and I had no evil intent in my heart against the King, Parliament. or any other of the Kings Subjects.

Judge. *But was you there only to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, as you say? And had you no other business there? And did you worship God according to the form of Worship now established in England by Authority? And had you the Common Prayer read amongst you?*

Prisoner. We meet together to worship God in reality, in Spirit and in Truth; and I never met under colour and pretence, but in obedience unto God, as he hath made known unto me.

Judge. *Richard Parsons, what say you; are you guilty of this Indictment? &c.*

Prisoner. Not guilty of much that is therein inserted.

Judge. *Did you worship God according to the Liturgie, or book of Common-Prayer?*

Prisoner. Doth not the Liturgy allow of worshipping of God in Spirit and in Truth?

Judge. *Yes.*

Prisoner. Then I am not guilty.

Judge. *How will you be tryed?*

Prisoner. By the Truth.

Judge. *John Coory, are you guilty of this Indictment?*

Prisoner. Not guilty of breaking any just Law.

Judge. *Did you meet according to the Liturgie? had you the Common-Prayer-Book amongst you.*

Prisoner. We met together to worship God in Spirit and Truth.

Judge. *Elizabeth Harris, are you guilty or not guilty?*

Prisoner. Not guilty of meeting under colour and pretence of religious Worship, but in reality, in Spirit and in Truth.

The Prisoners Answers being given, as is before mentioned, it was taken for not guilty, and so after much ado a Jury was called; their names are as followeth: *William Smith, William Blisse, Nicholas Blisse, Robert Bartlet, Robert Barber, William Smalbone, Thomas Henchman, &c.*

And these were sworn truly to try and Judge between the King and the Prisoners at the Bar, and true deliverance make according to their evidence, &c.

Then three Witnesses being called and sworn, *viz., James Baker*, a very prophane, swearing, drunken man; and *Richard Poorley*, a prophane swearing fellow; and *Henry Addams*, being all three soldiers: The Judge asked them if they saw the Prisoners at the Bar at *Robert Ashby's* house in *Bugbrook*, at a Meeting? unto which they answered, *Yes.* Then said the Judge, What day was it upon? and what time of the day? They answered, upon *Palm-Sunday*, about one or two of the clock in the afternoon. Then the Judge asked the number of the persons, and what they saw them do there? To which they answered, There was about thirty persons, and one of them was Preaching and Praying; for he sometimes stood, and sometimes kneeled down. Then the Judge asked them, whether they saw the Common-Prayer-Book amongst them? They answered, *No.* Then the Judge spake to the Jury, and set them in a way, that they might be sure to finde them

them guilty: they being a company of weak men (and some of them maliciously bent against truth) not well understanding the weighty matter they were employed in; so the Jury went forth, and in about half an hours time, returned again, and brought in their Verdict, that three of the Prisoners were guilty of the third offence; and the woman they brought in to be guilty of the second offence: Then said *John Randolph* a Lawyer, have you not brought them in all alike? Then there arose some confusion amongst them; but at length the matter was hushed up, and she found guilty of the third offence, as they account it; but to worship God in Spirit and Truth is no offence.

But it was observed by many present, that they never saw nor heard of so weak a Jury to be employed in so weighty a matter.

Then the Judge told the Prisoners, that the Jury had brought them in guilty; and said he, I am to pass the Judgement of Transportation upon you; and asked them what they had to say for themselves, that the Judgement of Transportation might not pass upon them?

John Coory said, We are an innocent People, and do desire to live in the fear of God. And further, said he, I do believe if we had been drunkards, swearers, lyars, covetous men, proud, coseners, cheaters, hypocrites, or dissemblers, we should not have been brought here; for that by you is tolerated, or at the least winked at, and little notice taken thereof.

Judge. *Are you a just man? are you without sin?*

Prisoner. I am one that feareth and serveth God daily, and I desire you may fear and serve the Lord also: And moreover, I have two small motherless children, and am a poor man; and so it will be good for you to take heed, that you do not make them fatherless also; for if you do, God will reward you according to your works.

Judge. *Is your obstinacy, and your own wilfulness, and I am sorry at my heart to do it, but only I and the Justices upon the Bench with me, are sworn to do it; and if we should not, we should prove our selves to be perjured persons, &c.*

Prisoner. Are you sworn to do that which you are sorry for? This is a sad thing; and surely Gods hand will turn against all unjust Judges, Justices, and oppressors of his People, and all unjust Rulers whatsoever.

In -

Interrupted.

Judge. *You must bearken unto me, and must not speak, you must give ear unto your Sentence; which was to this effect: That you and every of you, shall be transported unto the Island of Jamaica, there to remain for the space of seven years; and if you return again before the time be expired, it must be at your peril: but this privilege you have, that if you will pay in one hundred pounds apiece, before the Court be adjourn'd, you shall be freed from the Sentence of Transportation.*

It may be observed, although Judge Rainsford hath before declared himself to be sorry to proceed with friends in such manner as he did; yet the contrary plainly appears by his actions: for when as one (called) *George Robinson*, did speak to the said Judge, (he being upon the Bench) in the behalf of the said (now sentenced) Prisoners, and desired moderately to reason in their and his own behalf, (he being a Prisoner, and his time very near expired which he had been committed for) but the aforesaid Judge presently gave order for his further confinement, and bound him to his good behaviour (as they call it) whereby to prevent him of his just Liberty. And thus as of old, *Isa. 59. ver. 14. Judgement is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.*

Daniel Rooe being called to the Bar, and his Indictment read, it being in the same manner and form as was the other Indictments.

Judge. *Daniel Rooe, are you guilty of this Indictment, or not guilty?*

Prisoner. I have not transgressed any Law of God, or just Law of good men.

Judge. *That's no matter; are you guilty or not guilty, of the Indictment?*

Prisoner. As to that I have said. So this Answer being taken for not guilty, the Witnesses were called and sworn, being the same persons that witnessed against the other, and the questions put to them was much like the former, and the answers to the same purpose: Then the Jury was sworn, which was the same Jury that went forth upon the other, only the fore-man *William Smith*, was excepted against, and turned out by the Court. Then the Judge spake to the jury, and said, *You have heard, how that*

the witnesses have evidenced, That there was praying and preaching, but they did not hear the book of Common Prayer read amongst them. And also, said he, he himself cannot say they had the form of Common Prayer used amongst them. And here he laid the main stress of the matter, and seemed hereby to make it appear to the Jury, That because Common Prayer was not read, that they were Guilty; and the Jury being a going forth, the Prisoner spake unto them, and said, Oh Friends, and Countrymen of the Jury, I desire you, as in the presence of the Lord, that you take heed what ye do, for the thing is weighty you have in hand.

So the Jury went forth, and in a short time returned again, and cryed, A Verdict, a Verdict; the Court said, Who shall speak for you? they answered, The Fore-man; then said the Judge, How do you find it, are you all agreed? they said, Yes, and we find it for the King, &c. Then the Judge said to the Prisoner, Here you see the Jury hath found you Guilty.

Pris. I commit my cause to the Lord, for I have broken no Just Law.

Judg. Well, well, you was at these Conventicles under colour and pretence to worship God.

Pris. I was not there under colour and pretence, but in reality to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth, as I was led and guided by the Spirit of the Lord.

Judg. But how do you know its the Spirit of the Lord? you may be deluded; and led by an evil spirit, for we are not to be led by our own spirits, for some mens spirits leads them to Murder, and some mens spirits leads them to Adultery, &c.

Pris. The Spirit of the Lord leads into all truth, and this Spirit is not to be limited either to Time or place.

Judg. Well, come, have you any thing more to say for your self, why the Sentence of Transportation should not be passed upon you? if you have, you may speak, &c.

But the Prisoner said no more: Then was the Judgment of Transportation given, that he should be transported to the Island of Jamaica, there to remain for the space of seven years, unless the said prisoner would pay unto the Court one hundred pounds before the end of the Sessions. So the prisoner

ner was taken from the Bar, and with the rest returned to prison again.

Now people it may be well for you to take notice, how that the Tryal and Sentence aforesaid, was past upon the Lords people, even the next day following their pretended Fast, which they kept (as they say) for a blessing upon their Indeavours in their intended War with the *Dutch*. But how can a people expect a blessing from God, when they are smiting with the fist of wickedness, and even fighting against God and his Worship? Yea, even upon the very day of their pretended Fast, the Justices met together (as we are credibly informed) to carry on the afore-mentioned work, of Trying and Sentencing a people (for worshipping God) even for Transportation. And so instead of keeping a Fast, which the Lord hath chosen, which is to loose the bands of wickedness, and to undoe the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke, and deal their bread to the hungry, and to bring the poor that is cast out into their house, and to cover the naked, and not to hide themselves from their own flesh; I say, instead of these things, the quite contrary fruits are brought forth (as it was said upon the day and day following their pretended Fast) even an adding to the bands of wickedness, and laying burdens upon the innocent, neither do they let the oppressed go free, but rather add to their yoke, and instead of dealing bread to the hungry, and taking those to house that are cast forth, they even cast them out of house (and if the Lord doth not prevent them) out of their native Land also.

And this is the measure which hath been meated unto the Lords people by this generation of men, after all the sufferings which hath been inflicted upon them by imprisonment and otherwise, which work of persecution hath been much helped forward by one *John Garrett* (Steward to the man called *Lórd Spencer*) being a very great enemy to the appearance of God in any people that differs from the National Worship, and also by *John Witsfield*, and *Thomas Hogg*, Priests of those places where our peaceable meetings have been kept, for they have much stirred up the people against us, and some have

have readily answered their desires herein, and especially one called Captain *John Willoughby*, one also in commission to do justice; who both in Person, and by his Warrant, granted forth unto some of his souldiers, being leud wicked men, for the most part, such as the people where they dwell do very much abhor for their wickednesse sake: some of their names are as followeth, viz. *James Barker*, a chief leader of them, being a Dog-keeper, a drunken swearing fellow, and *Thomas Goodman* a Fidler, a man noted for much prophane gaming, having been accounted their Vice, or fool of their play, and another *Richard Pooley*, a prophane swearing fellow: And these, with such like as themselves, the aforesaid *John Willoughby*, hath impowered by Warrant or otherwise, hath come along with them in person to our Meetings from time to time, halling, beating, bruising and abusing friends, when peaceably met together for the worship and service of the Lord in truth, and not under colour and pretence, so not liable to the penalties in the late Act; for its known we are, and have been all along a peaceable people ever since the Lord raised us up, and the Nation hath had great experience of the same; and so its altogether unequitable and unjust, even the present proceedings of those which do daily rise up against us, for the exercise of our consciences towards God in the way of his blessed worship, which he hath clearly made known unto us, although we may not have a Common Prayer-Book to read amongst People, as Judge *Rainsford* would seem to incense the Jury and others, that we were breakers of the late Act, because we used not the Common Prayer; which the Lord hath let us see the weaknesse and unprofitableness of those things, and we cannot, like the dog, return to the old vomit again, and like the sow that is washed, to the wallowing in the mire; though for the same we suffer, and are counted as transgressors in the sight of our Judges, but we are clear in the sight of God; and also the late Act clears us, where our enemies themselves are not Judges, or where Judgement is given without partiality; and so our cause we commit to the Lord, even to plead in our behalf, who through his goodness hath engaged us to appear in the behalf of his Name and Testimony, which he hath given us to bear even in this day of our trial, and exercise of our faith and patience, wherein God hath preserved us hitherto, in all the dangers and

great sufferings which is known to the Lord right well ; and he hath furnished us in this our day with all things answerable to our present necessities ; so the glory of his works belong to him for ever. And so its for conscience sake we are sufferers this day, and for the worship of God, and not for evil doing, as our enemies and persecutors would render it. And this we are willing to make known, that so all might be informed concerning these things, and come to know the truth of this matter.

Postscript.

ANd now all moderate People may judge, whether here is any matter of Fact proved, or found to be done (by the aforesaid Innocent harmless People) against the King, or that might make for the disturbance of the peace of the Kingdom: And if the Judges & Jurors did but understand themselves, they, as well as other people, might see that all this that is done against us, is for worshipping of God in spirit and truth ; in which way we worship the true and living God, who is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in Spirit and Truth ; and for so doing are we exposed unto this cruel Sentence, even to be banished out of our native Land ; but and if it should be so, we can truly say, Lord forgive them, and lay not this evil to their charge ; but if not, O Lord, thy will be done : And indeed we might or could not expect, but that the Innocent should be brought in guilty, when as that wicked man *William Smith* of *Hardingstone* was the Fore-man of the (senseless, fearful, and envious) Jury, who said, that the three men were guilty of the third offence, and the woman of the second ; and said, that they were all agreed likewise : And when he was reprov'd for it by the Judge, and by *John Randolph* a Lawyer, he said, they were all guilty of the third offence. And now somewhat more of his actions may be laid open, who was taken to be a chief instrument for the bringing of the Innocent in (by a false Verdict) guilty, when no evil could justly be charged upon them, or matter of wrong done to any, the matter being only for worshipping

Shipping of God in Spirit and Truth, which the Scriptures of
 truth, and the Liturgy doth allow of; and moreover, this old hy-
 pocrite spake against the Common-Prayer, and said, as can be
 proved, if need be, That he hoped never to see the day, that
 Common-Prayer should be used again in *England*; and this was
 when he went to the Lectors at *Northampton*, one week after an-
 other, at which time *Cains* spirit bare rule in him, for then and
 by his means, did that honest upright hearted man *William Lovell*
 of *Hardingstone*, (called a *Quaker*) suffer eighteen months im-
 prisonment, for saying, that those he then called Ministers of Christ,
 were Ministers of Sathan, and that the Scriptures were not *the*
Word of God, but a *true Declaration of the Word*, &c. And now
 much more might be said concerning this man, but this is the de-
 sire of our hearts, that he, with all the rest of this wicked genera-
 tion, may repent of their ungodly actions, and never commit the
 like again, but turn unto God by amending their life, and former
 wicked conversation before it be too late, and the door of mercy
 shut against them; and then may they cry all the day long, and la-
 ment bitterly, and shall not be heard. Therefore hearken and
 incline your ears, unto what is written unto you, now whilst you
 have a day in which you may take counsel, if through wickedness
 your hearts be not hardened; but however ye are warned, I mean
 both Judges, Justices, Jury-men, and you that bear false witness
 against your neighbours and Country-men, the Innocent, harmless
 people called *Quakers*; although *Richard Rainsford* stileth them
 impudent, because they so boldly let their doors stand open when
 they meet (in the way of Gods blessed Worship) saying, that we
 were more hold (in this Country) then the rest of our fraternity,
 in other Countries; for, said he, they will keep their doors shut,
 and set their spies to see when any cometh to apprehend or take
 them; which thing we do believe is utterly false, and is not the
 manner of Gods people so to do: And this know ye our enemies,
 and false accusers; that the higher you climbe in oppression by Law,
 lyes, and false reports, the greater will be your fall into sorrow,
 and perpetual misery, for we can and do make our appeal unto
 that of God in all your consciences, who of you have we wrong-
 ed, whose Ox have we stolln? or whose Afs have we taken away?
 or what mischief have we hatched? or what insurrections have

we contrived ? Hath (either) former or latter experience shewed any such thing to be brought forth by us ? Declare if you can, or else for ever stop your mouths for speaking against us, and stay your hands from doing of violence unto us, for serving and obeying of God, and think not your proceedings can afright us, for th's know, we are upon that Rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Therefore in vain do ye strive, and to no purpose do you cumber your selves, and fret like distracted men, for you may as easily stop the Sun from rising, or stay it from going its course, and setting in its appointed season, as hinder or stop that good work that God hath begun in the hearts of his people, and will perfect to his praise for ever. Although *Richard Rainford* said in his Charge, speaking of the *Quakers*, that they had a way to stop their multiplying, and growing numerous ; for said he, our Sovereign Lord the King, with the advice of the wisest men in the Land, have allowed them to meet to the number of four, besides the family, or them of the house where they meet, but nothing will serve their turn but thirty or forty, or more, and so brings themselves under the penalties of the Law, and then we have two Convictions, and for the third banishment ; and if they return again without license, before seven years be expired, then we have the Gallows and the Halter, and that will be the end ; and we have our sacred Majesty to be our Head, and his wholesome Laws to be our rule to walk by ; we have Goals, Stocks, and Whips, and the Nation on our side, and what need we fear, we are safe, and have strength enough, &c.

Oh, but this know, ye stupified ones, that ye are all this while but mortal men ; and if the hand of God be turned against you, what will all these things do for you ? These cannot deliver you from the stroak of his hand, neither give you peace in the day of trouble, for our strength is in the Lord, and he is God over all blessed for ever, unto all eternity ; and its not two Convictions, Banishment to *Jamaica* for seven years, Goals, Whips, Stocks, or Death, that can stop our growth, or prosperity in the Truth, hinder or separate us from God, or the comfortable enjoyment of his good presence, as we abide faithful unto the end ; therefore beware how you proceed, or else you will suddenly be broken, and split against the same Rock that those that went before you were,

who fought against God and his people as ye do now, making your Goals, Fines, and Banishment your weapons of defence, which we set in defiance in this Gods mighty day; and think not that if you should banish many of us out of our native Land and that we should seal our testimony by laying down our lives (as many have already done) that this will be a means to establish you, as if you should never be removed: Oh build not your selves up with such vain hopes, for these will utterly fail you, and you by so doing will sink into confusion, and the pit of endless torment and perpetual misery; and the cause of the widows and fatherless God will plead, and avenge in his own due time, and bring deliverance to his oppressed people, who put their trust and confidence in him alone; and although you colour over your unrighteous and ungodly proceedings, with saying, ye are sorry, but this be assured of, it will not excuse you, for its deceit and hypocrisie, and dabling with untempered mortar; and though you may make some silly people think its so indeed, yet I tell you plainly, its all but a lye, and truth is witnessed, which is become the beesom to sweep lyars, and the refuge of lies into the fire; and thus are your garments stripped off, and your nakedness is seen, and your shame will also more and more appear, unto all that have but in the least measure their eyes opened; and you shall become a by-word unto all that knoweth you both far and near, except you speedily repent of the evil of your doings.

And now you being warned, are left without excuse, and happy will you be, who in this the day of your visitation, wherein the Lord waits to be gracious to your souls and to do you good, do return unto him by speedy repentance before your day be overpast, that so you may be hid in the day of his fierce wrath, which will assuredly come upon all the workers of iniquity, which is the true desire of us who are your friends and Country men, and lovers of the souls of all mankind. Dear people we know the generality of you is not unacquainted with the cruelties which many of us who are called *Quakers* hath patiently indured, through the strength of our God, by the Priests, Magistrates and People, for many years; we cannot but mention the Priests first, because we well know they have been, and are the chiefest Agents to instigate the Magistrates and the common sort of people also, against the innocent suffering

Suffering people of the Lord, and their false accusations affirmed by oath hath not been wanting therein; as for instance, *Richard Harris*, Priest of *Kislingbery*, who got a Warrant from *John Willoughby*, called Justice, to bring before him (the said Justice) one *William Carr* of the said Town of *Kislingbery*; so accordingly it was done, and there the Priest took an oath against him, and affirmed (though falsely) that the said *William Carr* had dispersed treasonable Papers, amongst the people of the aforesaid Town, and the Paper which he was accused for dispersing, was not at all tending to any such purpose, neither did the said *William* give it to that man which the Priest swore he did, for his neighbour came along with him to the Justice, and there testified that the said *William Carr* was not the man which he had the Paper of, but it was another man of the same Town which gave it him, yet notwithstanding the said *William Carr* was sent to the Goal upon the account aforesaid, viz. for dispersing treasonable Papers, and there he lay until the next Sessions holden for the County of *Northampton*, and then was brought forth, and they knowing they had dealt deceitfully by him to cast him into prison upon an account which they could not prove against him, so they mentioned no more the treasonable Paper, but told him then, if he would take the Oath of Allegiance, he might be set at liberty, but he conscientiously refusing was sent back to prison again, where he laid down his life not long after, and left his Wife with six fatherless children, and notwithstanding the aforesaid Priest hath persecuted him unto death, yet he seeketh still to ruine his widow and fatherless children; for he hath caused *Sarah Carr* widow, the wife of *William Carr*, to be arrested by a Writ, and brought from her six fatherless children to the County Goal in *Northampton*, where her tender Husband laid down his life, having no other thing against her but for milk, which Tythe-milk as he calls it, came to the value of ten shillings, or thereabouts, but he never demanded it of her, but caused her to be arrested as aforesaid, and brought to the Goal, where she at present lieth for the testimony of a good conscience. And *John Whitefield* Priest of *Bugbrook*, and the aforesaid cruel blood-thirsty Priest *Richard Harris* of *Kislingbery*, these two

Priests often instigated *John Willoughby* (called Justice) to act as he hath done against the innocent people of the Lord, and when his soldiers hath come to a Meeting, by the aforesaid *John Willoughbies* order, they have especially called for some friends by their names, who dwelt at the Towns of *Bugbrook* and *Kislingbery*, and took them away from amongst many, saying they must have such, however; and two of *Bugbrook*, called by names *Joseph Gammage* and *Richard Ashby*, was by the soldiers particularly called for at a Meeting from amongst many, and *Thomas Dent* of *Kislingbery*, Miller, those two Priests (as we understand) had given information against those three innocent Persons, who by the soldiers was brought to *Northampton*, before *Jo. Willoughby* called Justice, who committed them to the Goal, where the afore-named *Joseph Gammage* and *Richard Ashby* sealed their testimony with their blood, and the afore-named *Thomas Dent* lieth in prison upon the same account still, and hath been prisoner above one year and half; so both these Priests being guilty of blood, we cannot but mention them amongst the afore-going cruelties of the Magistrates of this Age and Generation, which they have acted against the innocent people of the Lord, whom they seek to oppress and lay heavy burdens upon, yet our hope and trust is in the Lord our God, who we know is the living God, and will arise in his fierce wrath, and will avenge himself upon his adversaries, and the adversaries of his chosen people: but this is our desires unto the Lord, in the behalf of ours and his enemies, that they might return from the evil of their doings, before the Lord appears in his fierce wrath, who will bring destruction upon them at unawares, except they repent.

THE END.